

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LENING 00871 101422Z

43

ACTION CU-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 /016 W
----- 116850

R 101329Z JUN 75
FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1309
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
USIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OEXC UR (SMITH, DENNIS)

SUBJECT: VISIT TO LENINGRAD OF STANG DENNIS SMITH

REF: MOSCOW 7870

STATE FOR CU/EE, EUR/SOV; USIA FOR IEE, ICS; BELGRADE,
MOSCOW AND WARSAW FOR P&C

1. SMITH VISITED LENINGRAD JUNE 5-8 (TWO WORKING DAYS PLUS
WEEKEND) AND MET WITH LENINGRAD UNION OF WRITERS AND LENINGRAD
FIRE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS.

2. UNION OF WRITERS ORGANIZED MEETING CHAIRED BY UNION
SECRETARY AND HEAD OF LENINGRAD BRANCH OF PUBLISHING HOUSE
"SOVIET WRITER," ANATOLII CHIPANOV. ALSO PRESENT WERE THREE
SOVIET WRITERS CHOSEN BECAUSE OF THEIR PREVIOUS OCCUPATIONS:
ONE EX-CHAUFFEUR, ONE EX-STEEL WORKER, AND ONE STILL-WORKING
ENGINEER, THOUGH ALSO QUALIFIED AS WRITERS UNION MEMBER.
THEME OF SMITH'S PRESENTATION AS PER REFTEL, PARA. 2.
DISCUSSION, WHICH LASTED APPROXIMATELY TWO HOURS, WENT ON
TO BECOME A DETAILED EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION RE THE BUSINESS
OF WRITING IN BOTH COUNTRIES -- ROYALTIES, ADVANCES, FEES,
ETC. -- WITH SOVIET WRITERS VISIBLY AGOG AT THE SUM SMITH
RECEIVED FROM HIS 2-MILLION COPY BESTSELLER.

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PAGE 02 LENING 00871 101422Z

3. ON FRIDAY SMITH VISITED LENINGRAD CITY FIRE HEADQUARTERS WHERE HE WAS RECEIVED BY THE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT, COL. LEONID I. ISACHENKO, HIS DEPUTY, COL. MIKHAIL V. MIL'NIKOV, AND FORMER DEPUTY, NOW FIRE DEPARTMENT MUSEUM HEAD BORIS I. KONCHAEV. A DISCUSSION OF COMPARATIVE ORGANIZATIONS AND PRACTICES ENSUED (LENINGRAD WAS REPORTED TO HAVE BETWEEN 500-600 MAJOR FIRES PER YEAR, VS. NEW YORK'S 12,000; LENINGRADERS TURN IN ABOUT 10,000 ALARMS PER YEAR, OF WHICH ABOUT A THIRD ARE FALSE), TOASTS EXCHANGED, AND SMITH WAS PRESENTED WITH A MINATURE SOVIET FIRE EXTEINGUISHER WHICH TURNED OUT TO CONTAIN A BOTTLE OF VODKA. THE PARTY THEN MOVED TO ANOTHER PART OF TOWN TO VISIT THE FIRE-MUSEUM. ALTHOUGH SMITH INDICATED A DESIRE TO MEET WITH FIREMEN AND GET A LOOK AT THEIR TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT "TIME, UNFORTUNATELY, DID NOT PERMIT." THROUGHOUT THE FIRE DEPARTMENT VISIT A REPORTER FROM THE LENINGRAD KOMSOMOL NEWSPAPER SMENA WAS PRESENT. HE INTERVIEWED AND PHOTOGRAPHED SMITH, AND HAS OFFERED THE ARTICLE TO SMENA AND TRUD. POST WILL ADVISE IN EVENT IT SURFACES. POST CONSIDERS SMITH'S FAILURE TO BRING SLIDES AND/OR FILMS SHOWING NYFD ACTIVITY MOST UNFORTUNATE. LENINGRAD FD WAS PREPARED TO ORGANIZE SLIDE-SHOW MEETING WITH CONSIDERABLY LARGER NUMBER OF PERSONNEL AND HAD TO BE ADVISED SHORTLY BEFORE VISIT THAT MEETING WOULD BE VERBAL. POST SUGGESTS THAT IN GENERAL, STAG VISITORS BE SUPPORTED WHENEVER POSSIBLE WITH AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS WHICH PROVIDE NOT ONLY ADDED IMPACT TO PRESENTATION BUT TEND TO CALL FORTH LARGER AUDIENCES.

4. CONGEN CONCURS WITH EMBASSY ASSESSMENT VISIT AS PER PARA 7, REFTTEL, EXCEPT TO EXTENT THAT LENINGRAD AUDIENCES, CONSIDERABLY LESS SOPHISTICATED IN TERMS OF AMERICAN LITERATURE THAN MOSCOW, HAD LITTLE DIFFICULTY ACCEPTING SMITH AS A SIGNIFICANT WRITER AND WARMED TO HIS DISCUSSION OF THE BLUE COLLAR WRITER AND HIS GENRE. VISIT ALSO SERVED TO FURTHER DEVELOP THE FAIRLY NEW CONCEPT HERE THAT AMERICAN WRITERS MAY AND WILL BE IN CONTACT WITH THE LOCAL WRITERS UNION-- A FAIRLY NERVOUS ORGANIZATION WHICH HAS SO FAR RESISTED ANY PROGRAMMING OTHER THAN SMALL GROUP MEETINGS. WHILST NO LESS INTERESTED IN PROGRAMMING UPDIKE-LEVEL WRITERS IN LENINGRAD, CONGEN SEES FUNCTION OF KEEPING DOOR OPEN VIA VISITS OF LESSER LIGHTS NOT WITHOUT VALUE.

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5. VOZNESENSKY CONNECTION WORKED WELL IN LENINGRAD WHERE SMITH ARRIVED WITH NAMES OF SEVERAL VOZNESENSKY FRIENDS. SMITH AND BPAO DINED AND SOCIALIZED WITH SAME IN APARTMENTS AND RESTAURANTS TO THE GENERAL BENEFIT OF POST'S CONTACT FILE.

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